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Who Supports the Eu-Led Reforms for Democratization in Turkey? Evidence from the Turkish University Youths

Yusuf TEKİN

Police Academy, Ankara, Turkey

yusuftekin@yahoo.com

Muhsin KAR

Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey

mkar@cu.edu.tr

Birol AKGÜN

Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey

bakgun@selcuk.edu.tr

Hüseyin AĞIR

K. Maras Sutcu Imam University, K.Maras, Turkey

huseyinagir@ksu.edu.tr

Bülent ÖZ

Osmaniye Korkutata University, Osmaniye, Turkey

ozb1@hotmail.com

Abstract: It is generally argued that Turkey seems to be different geographically, culturally, politically and economically from the EU. Transformation of Turkey towards the Europe in these terms requires overcoming a broad range of the obstacles and maintaining reforms process without losing public support. This situation exposes the importance of internal dynamics in the accession process in terms of carrying out necessary reforms for the full membership. However, Turkey recently experienced an unprecedented reform process as a result of the synergy between external and internal factors, particularly the EU. This research tries to empirically examine the youth support for the EU-led reform process by utilizing a novel data set obtained from the questionnaire carried out in 26 different universities about 2000 students, during November and December 2009, in Turkey. The empirical findings show that partisanship, both political and religious attachments and national identity are the important factors which explain differences of individual support for the EU-led reform process for democratization in Turkey.

Keywords: Democratization, Public Support, European Integration, Partisanship, Religious attachment, National Identity, Turkey.

Introduction

The integration of Turkey with the EU constitutes an interesting case for several reasons. It is generally argued that Turkey seems to be different geographically, culturally, politically and economically from the EU. Transformation of Turkey towards the Europe in these terms requires overcoming a broad range of the obstacles, changes and maintaining reforms process without losing public support. In other words, the Turkish governments, on the one hand, try to fulfill the EU accession conditionality and, on the other hand, they face with an increasing opposition from the *status quo* or various segment of the society. This dichotomy exposes the importance of internal dynamics in the accession process in terms of carrying out necessary reforms for the full membership.

However, Turkey recently experienced a rapid transformation as a result of the synergy between external and internal factors. The EU particularly has played an anchor role in this period. Especially, Turkey has carried out important political reforms to democratize the political structure after acceptance of an official candidate at the Helsinki summit in 1999. In addition, as the newly elected government in 2002 forced

aggressively for a date for the start of membership negotiations, it demonstrated an unprecedented performance in both the economic and political realms.

However, it is argued that the dynamism of the reform was replaced by the stagnation in the recent years, starting roughly after Turkey secured the launch of the accession process in 2005. Confronted with the opposition and demands of increasingly irritating nationalist voices in the country, as well as adverse international conditions, the ruling AK Party lost the momentum of its reformist path, also leading to a stalemate in Turkish-EU relations. As far as the dynamics of reform process is concerned, one of the important questions is whether there was/has been a sufficient motivation for both reforms in the past and potential transformation in future within the Turkish public and civil society. Although there is a limited literature on why Turkish decision makers are pursuing integration with the Europe (McLaren and Müftüler-Baç, 2003) and why the Turkish citizens would vote for Turkey's accession to the EU in a possible membership referendum (Çarkoğlu, 2003; Kentmen, 2008), existing research on the EU-Turkey interactions lacks empirical analyses of whether and to what extent Turkish people support to the reform process in Turkey. In order to sustain the reforms, the public support is well needed for further reforms in the future in Turkey.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to investigate the determinants of individual support for the EU-led reforms on democratization in Turkey. In particular, this research tries to empirically examine the youth support for the EU-led reform process by utilizing a novel data set obtained from the questionnaire carried out in 26 different universities about 2000 students, during November and December 2009, in Turkey.

The EU-led Reform Process in Turkey

The ruling elite have long seen the economic and political integration into Europe a cherished goal for Turkey. However, Turkey's integration process reveals unprecedented challenges and opportunities for both sides in terms of economic and political gains. In particular, Turkey would differentiate from the previous enlargements in the context of its population, size, geographical location, economic, security and military potential, as well as cultural and religious characteristics. These features make Turkey special and interesting not only for the EU but also for researchers in many fields in the social sciences. This subject is still undoubtedly one of the Turkey's most important foreign policy problems and also an extremely powerful domestic issue as well.

Turkey has been a member in many organizations in the Western Europe since the post war period (the Council of Europe in 1949, the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in 1954, the NATO in 1952, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975). Turkey was officially recognized as a candidate for the European Union in Helsinki in 1999, given a date for the beginning of the accession negotiations in December 2004 at which this meeting decided to start the negotiations in October 2005. The negotiations for full membership came four decades after the Ankara Agreement signed between Turkey and the EEC in 1963. In addition, Turkey signed a Customs Union Agreement with the EU in 1995. This brief history states that Turkey qualifies as the longest standing associate partner of the EU.

Although the Ankara Agreement was one of the critical turning in Turkey's relations with Europe in 1963, this relationship has not followed a smooth process. In particular, this relationship was interrupted by the intervention of the military into the politics in 1980. The EU proved to be an extremely active and vocal source of criticism of the military regime at a time when the US was relatively passive and indifferent actor for strategic and geopolitical objectives (Öniş, 1999b:128). The EU's constant pressure clearly was very crucial and encouraged Turkey's early transition to democracy in 1983 and the relations were finally normalized in 1986.

Turkey surprisingly made an application for membership in 1987 and was rejected mostly on economic grounds. The Commission's advisory report at that time makes a very short reference to the poor democracy in Turkey. However gross violations of human rights in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s overshadowed the normalized relations. The European Parliament played a leading role to draw the attention of the European states and public to the situation of minorities in Turkey, large limitations over political and civil rights, the fate of political prisoners, disappearances and anonymous killings (Dağı, 2001). In particular, the European Parliament declared in 1995, it would vote against the custom union on the grounds of gross human rights in Turkey and this caused the Turkish government to make certain democratic reforms immediately. However, developments after the agreement for the Customs Union with the EU showed that this agreement *per se* failed to provide an appropriate mix of conditions and incentives to induce a major transformation in domestic politics and economy in Turkey (Öniş, 2003:9).

The declaration of the Copenhagen criteria in 1993 opened a new era both in the EU history of enlargement and in Turkey. These criteria indicated that the membership was not only an issue of economic or political integration, but also an integration of democratic values and norms that are usually immaterial and intangible. Due to the terrorist movement in the southern Turkey, security was prioritized and the Turkish government was not ready for such a change and did not prepare a serious plan for democratization which was constantly postponed (Erdogan, 2006). In addition, Turkey's relations with the EU had its worst moment in 1997

at the Luxemburg summit which did not give Turkey as a candidacy status for full membership. This decision created a reaction in the Turkish side which decided to reject all conditions and not to discuss any issue with the EU.

Turkey had to wait until the acceptance of an official candidate in 1999 at the Helsinki summit with the same conditions as the other candidates. This candidacy status represented a fundamental turning point in Turkey-EU relations and triggered the democratization in Turkey. Although significant constitutional and legal reforms have been adopted under the influence of the globalization of democratic norms and the encouraging effect of the prospect of the EU membership to strengthen and deepen the democratic values in Turkey ever since 1983, they are not sufficient to complete the transformation of its political system into a liberal or consolidated democracy.

In particular, the 1995, 1999, 2001 and 2004 reforms are more important in terms of democratization and liberalization and modified the authoritarian nature of the 1982 constitution (Yazıcı, 2004; Özbudun, 2007). The authoritarian legacy was eliminated not only by these constitutional reforms, but also by several legal reforms, called as 'harmonization packages', which adopted between February 2002 and August 2003. These packages enlarged the scope of certain fundamental rights and liberties such as the freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom of association (Yazıcı, 2004:99). In addition, role of the military over the politics substantially reduced by amending the structure of the National Security Council (NSC) which is a decision-making in the course of last two decades. Clearly, a change of this magnitude would have been impossible in the absence of a powerful and highly institutionalized EU anchor in the direction of full membership (Öniş, 2003:13).

It is generally argued that the dynamism of this first democratization period was replaced by the stagnation after Turkey secured the launch of the accession process in 2005. Confronted with the opposition and demands of increasingly irritating nationalist voices in the country, as well as adverse international conditions, the ruling AK Party lost the momentum of its reformist path, also leading to a stalemate in Turkish-EU relations. In particular, nature of the negotiation as being 'open-ended', uncertainty about the future of the negotiations, existence of explicit opposition of some member states (i.e. France, Austria and to some extent Germany), internal opposition from the political parties, hard line Republicans and Nationalists and the government's reform fatigue seems to slow down the reform process.

At this point, it is very important who has supported /supports the EU-led reform process in Turkey, since it is very difficult to continue this process without the internal support.

Source of Public Support for the EU-led Reform Process

There is a large literature to examine the differences among the public on the support for the EU integration. Several previous studies have identified systematic differences in individual-level support for integration related to partisanship (Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991; Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren, 1994; Franklin, Marsh, Wlezien, 1994; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Marsh, 1995; Cichowski, 2000, Tverdova and Anderson, 2004), age, gender (Carey, 2002), income (Anderson and Reichert, 1996; Gabel and Palmer, 1995; Gabel, 1998; Gabel and Whitten, 1997), occupation (McLaren, 2004; Venables, 2003; Jolly and Brinegar, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Kentmen, 2008), cognitive skills (Inglehart, 1970a; Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991; Janssen, 1991), political values (Inglehart, 1970b, 1990; Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991; Anderson and Reichert, 1996), support for government (Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren, 1994; Franklin, Marsh, Wlezien, 1994; Tanasoiu and Colonescu, 2008), identity (Smith, 1992; Carey, 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Kentmen, 2008) and religious attachment (Nelsen et al., 2001; Çarkoğlu, 2003; Nelsen and Guth, 2003, Kentmen, 2008)

Based on this vast literature, this paper tries to empirically investigate the support for the EU-led reform process in terms of partisanship and political self-description (ideology), religious attachment and national identity in Turkey.

Partisanship and Political Attachment

With the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the founders of the State clearly stated declared that their objectives were to catch up with and become part of "contemporary civilization" which constituted the fundamentals of the Turkish modernization. The Turkish modernization effort in nature was elite and state driven and these bureaucratic elite controlled the course for the development (Mehmet, 1983:57; Öniş, 1999; Barkey, 2000:88-90). The main characteristic of the Turkish modernization as argued by Black (1967) is that socio-economic developments were formed by this political elite whom play a central role in almost all affairs in a manner of traditional strong state which has acting capacity almost completely independent from civil society (Heper, 1985). Based on this background, a close relationship with the West and especially with the European integration has always been one of the important foreign policy objectives for Turkey. With the full membership perspective for Turkey in the early 2000, Turkey has experienced an increasing reform process and the EU has

played as an important external anchor in Turkey. The public support for the reform is very essential to push the democratization further.

Inglehart, Rabier and Reif (1991:152) put it that the EU represents a vehicle for social, political, and economic reforms. However, every segment of the public may not be affected equally and in the same way by these reforms and therefore while the winners in this process may support the reforms, the losers may oppose the new reforms. In a democratic society, the power of the public is very important and, citizens may halt the reform process by withdrawing their support.

Following the literature on the link between partisanship, political attachment and support for the EU integration (Inglehart, Rabier and Reif, 1991; Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren, 1994; Franklin, Marsh, Wlezien, 1994; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Marsh, 1995; Cichowski, 2000, Tverdova and Anderson, 2004), this paper proposes that citizens adopt attitudes toward the reform process that reflect the position of the party they support. In other words, the party shapes its supporters' attitudes toward reform independent of their personal characteristics (e.g., occupation, income, and values) that might influence both their choice of party and support for integration. In addition, when the public make up their decision on something that there is not enough knowledge about it, they look at the behavior of the political figures (leaders) or political institutions (parties) they support or vote for.

In addition, as Inglehart (1970b, 1990) posited that support for European integration, and therefore for the reform process in Turkey, is associated with value orientations regarding economic and political issues (Gabel 1998). According to the theory, citizens' political behaviors are structured by the socioeconomic conditions surrounding their formative, or preadult, years. These conditions are expected to shape certain values and attitudes that tend to persist over an adult's lifetime. To this end, political attachment of citizens in terms of self-description (social democrat, Turkish nationalist, democrat, Islamist, nationalist (ulusalcı) and Atatürkist (Atatürkçü) etc.) may explain variation in individual attitudes toward the reform process.

In Turkey, the harmonization packages changed the military backed 1982 Constitution in the 2000s are more associated with the human rights, freedom of expression, democratic standards. It can be argued that these reforms are directly related with not only the physical security (materialist value) but also intellectual fulfillment and self-actualization (post-materialistic value). Consequently, one might expect that political attachment with the materialist and post-materialist values in terms of political self-description may explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the reform process. In other words, those who support a less nationalistic and a more egalitarian society would be more likely to be supportive for the reform process. Along the conventional left-right ideological divide those who consider themselves to be leftists are significantly more inclined to support the EU-led reforms. Specifically, individuals identifying with conservative parties are found to be more supportive of membership than left-oriented respondents (Shepherd 1975; Inglehart, Rabier & Reif 1991)

As far as the attitudes of the main political parties in Turkey toward the EU are concerned, the Republican People Party (RPP) as a founder of the Republic is generally accepted to support the EU membership on the basis of the legacy of Kemalism, westernization, from the beginning (Ahmad, 1993; Özdemir, 2008). The RPP as an opposition party was usually positive in the reform process in 2000s and support the EU Harmonization Packages. Recently, the RPP has been very critical to go further reform on democratization in terms of solution for the Kurdish issue. Therefore the reluctance of the RPP is characterized to be a soft euro-skepticism and to resist to reform process (Verney, 2007). Öniş (2007) argues that a conservative, religious based party may play structurally a limited role in promoting Europeanization agenda and highlights the need of a major European-style social democratic party which promotes domestically democratization and supports Turkey's bid for full membership externally through the European social democrat parties.

The National Action Party (NAP) as a Turkish nationalist party is generally against the reform process, although first two important harmonization packages passed the Parliament during a coalition government including itself. The NAP is against the democratization on the grounds that the reform process may encourage the separatist feelings and actions in the southeast of Turkey and would split the country in two separate entities.

The Justice and Development Party (JDP) coming from a pro-Islamic political tradition, namely the National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) (National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi) in the late 1960s, National Salvation Party in the 1970s, Welfare Party (WP) (Refah Partisi) from the early 1980s to 1997, Virtue Party (VP) (Fazilet Partisi) from 1997 to 1999 and currently Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)), established, after the closure of the Virtue Party, by "the reformers" of this party in 2002 (Dağı, 2005; Toprak, 2005) and has been ruling the country for the last 8 years (2002-?). The JDP puts forward pro-western external relations in economic and political terms, aimed at being a full member of the EU at the end and has been very enthusiastic for the democratization in Turkey. The JDP's impressive politics of reform paved the way to EU accession negotiations and furthered the democratization of Turkey (Karakas, 2007). In particular, after the Copenhagen Summit in 2002 stated that if Turkey meets the Copenhagen Political Criteria until the EU Summit in December 2004, the accession negotiations will start "without delay". Therefore, the JDP started a wave of reform period by amending the constitution and other legal documents to meet the Copenhagen Political Criteria.

The ruling JDP's enthusiastic efforts for Turkey's EU membership, in contrast to the hesitations of the Kemalists, is indicative of the changing positions of political forces in Turkish politics. As the Kemalists seemed to have abandoned the idea and ideal of westernization, the Islamists have moved towards advocating further westernization, which entails deeper democracy, broader human rights, closer integration with the EU and a lesser (Kemalist) state (Dağı, 2005). Verney (2007) argues that the moderate Islamists of the JDP have become the most vigorous elements of the globalizing pro-reform coalition, being transformed in the process into self-processed 'Muslim democrats'.

With the entrance of the JDP to the political arena, the Turkish politics cannot be evaluated in the traditional left-right axis. While the JDP pushes for reform, the RPP resists to it. Normally it is expected that reluctance of the RPP as agent for westernization for a long time and central left for asking further democratization is not well understood in Turkey. Therefore, in order to emphasize the complexity in the political arena, Öniş (2007) states that the political struggle currently goes on between 'conservative globalists', promoting the domestic reform process, and 'defensive nationalists', resisting it. Many of the secular elites which have traditionally supported Westernization, including the military, are uncomfortable with the political reforms promoted through EU conditionality.

There is also a shift on the attitudes of the Felicity Party (FP) toward the EU. In the past, Coming from the National Outlook Movement tradition, the parties (the WP and the VP) before the FP was against the EU and openly declared this discourse in the 1980s and 1990s. The 28 February Process seems to be an important element and has resulted in a change in the attitudes of the party towards the EU (Taniyici, 2003). Since then the FP emphasizes the democratic principles and human rights and seems to be in favor of the EU membership. It is expected that the supporters of the FP would approve the EU-led reform process.

On the other hand, the Democratic Society Party (DSP) as a Kurdish nationalist party (banned by the constitutional court and re-structured under the Peace and Democracy Party recently) pushed for further reform in terms of minority rights, cultural right, asking the military to stop the military actions against the Kurdish separatist in the southeast of Turkey. The DSP was supportive in the Parliament in these harmonization packages.

Based upon these ideological backgrounds and political practices, one might argue that the central left (RPP) and central right (JDP) parties, in addition to the pro-Kurdish one (DSP), favor for reform which proposes further democratization in the country. On the other hand, the Turkish nationalist party (NAP) is against for the reform process. Following this discussion, it is claimed that:

H1: The supporters of the mainstream political parties (central-left and central-right) are more likely to be in favor of the EU-led reforms.

H2: The supporters of the Kurdish nationalist party are more likely to be in favor of the EU-led reforms.

H3: The supporters of the Turkish nationalist party are more likely to be skeptical about the EU-led reforms.

H4: Type of political attachment (ideological self-description) may explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the reform process.

Religious Attachment

Recently, there is a growing literature whether social norms and religious beliefs are predictors of individual opinion about European integration. In order to evaluate complex and relatively new social issues, individual attachment to a religion might be very important. In particular, Seul (1999) argues that religious beliefs may have implications for evaluating political and social life and therefore may propose specific rules to provide sense stability for individuals in a changing world. New and relatively unknown developments in the social, economic and political areas may bring about insecurity and ambiguity for the future and may result in resistance for these new formations. The topic is covered in the researches whether a Protestant or a Catholic behaves differently towards the European integration (Hagevi, 2002; Nelsen and Guth, 2003; Nelsen et al., 2001; Vollaard, 2006). In addition, this literature emphasizes that the degree of attachment to religious norms and values might be matter. In particular, the effect of religion on the behaviors may change with the religiosity of the individual (Nelsen et al., 2001; Nelsen and Guth, 2003; Kentmen, 2008).

However empirical research on how Islamic beliefs shape attitudes toward the EU is very limited (Çarkoğlu, 2003; Kentmen, 2008). A popular perception is that Islamist fundamentalists disapprove of Western values and the West's cultural, political and economic hegemony. This link between Islam and the West has long been one of the hotly debated issues on two grounds (Kentmen, 2008). First one is about a popular perception on whether Islam is anti-western, following the attacks of 11 September 2001 (Dagi, 2005). If this argument is valid, alienation of Muslim from Europe would lead Muslim individuals with strong religious beliefs to be less supportive for the EU. In this case, Muslims are more likely to be reluctant for supporting main principles of the western ideals. Second one is whether the religiosity plays any role in supporting the Western ideas. To what extent, greater attachment to Islamic norms and values may influence the individual approaches toward the West.

In order to truly evaluate Turkish Islamic attitudes towards the West, one should go back to the period of Ottoman Empire. Especially when the Empire lagged behind the West in terms of political and economic developments and technological achievements, some Islamic elites mainly directed their criticism to the West and did not look for the roots of the collapse in the Empire. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, many Islamists continued to criticize Western influences because they believed that the secular reforms achieved by the Turkish Republic had originated in the West and therefore did not have any place in Islamic teaching (Kentmen, 2008).

The Islamic elite in the 1970s and the 1980s generally saw the European Community as a Christian Club, further secularism, and new form of westernization and opposed to Turkey's attempt to join in it (Canefe and Bora, 2003). This perception radically changed after indirect military intervention into the politics in 1997, known as "the 28 February Process". This intervention was the result of accepting the political Islam as a threat to the Republic and tried to control "all forms of Islamist expression in the public sphere" (Dağı, 2004:138). This move from the secular forces of the Republic increased the fear among the Islamic elite who evaluate that a more radical and oppressive form of implementation of secularism is unbearable. As a result, many Islamists have become supporters of 'Western ideals' and loud advocates of Western values such as liberalism, democracy, freedom of thought and freedom of religion in recent years as a response to state control over religious expression in Turkey (Dağı, 2004). Canefe and Uğur (2004) specifically revealed that compared with the past, the state elite had become relatively cautious about accession, whereas antiestablishment groups, such as Islamists and ethnic minorities, had become more supportive in Turkey.

Given this very brief historical background, it seems plausible to expect many Muslim individuals in Turkey at the present time to have a positive view of the EU, which is seen as promoting and guaranteeing liberal rights (Kentmen, 2008). Following this discussion, it is claimed that:

H5: Level of attachment to religion may explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the EU-led reforms.

H6: Level of attachment to Islam may explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the EU-led reforms.

National Identity

Recently there is a growing literature which points to national identity as an important explanation of (lack of) support for European integration (Carey 2002, Marks and Hooghe 2003, Hooghe and Marks 2004, Netjes and Edwards 2004). The discussion on identity draws on psychology of group membership to consider how national identity affects support for European integration (De Vries and van Kersbergen, 2007). Urry (2000) argues that individuals rely on their national identity to frame their needs and to differentiate themselves from others. The literature developed by Smith (1992), Shore (1993), Christin and Trechsel (2002) and Hooghe and Marks (2005) emphasizes that individuals who have strong attachments to their national identity might perceive the integration of member states as a threat causing to lose their national identity, because it dissolves the differences among the national communities. Carey (2002:393) highlights that individuals may prefer the "protection of the in-group (the nation), and the group identity at stake, from the out-group (the EU)".

However Hooghe and Marks (2004) points to the multi-layered and flexible nature of social identity and suggest that some individual can prefer two identities (national and European identities) simultaneously. This preference imply that these individuals do not see their national identity as their only reference point and are happy with weakening of national identity in the process of the unification (Kentmen, 2008). At this point, Marks and Hooghe (2003) make an important classification which argues that one needs to distinguish between several types of national identity, by evaluating the extent to which national identity is exclusive or inclusive. Individuals who consider their national identity as exclusive will see supranational governance as a threat, whereas those with multiple identities will be favorably disposed to governance beyond the nation-state (Kentmen, 2008).

As far as empirical research on this issue is concerned, the link between national identity and support for the European integration is ambiguous. On the one hand, Marks (1999) and Haesly (2001) argue that national identity is consistent with European identity and support for European integration and, on the other hand, Carey (2002) and Ketmen (2008) reveal that attachment to national identity have a significant negative impact on support for European integration. In other words, the literature states that individuals who attach themselves more closely with their nation than with the EU to be less supportive of European unification (Hooghe and Marks, 2004). Based on the discussion above, one might argue that there is a direct link between national identity and support for the EU-led reforms. As far as the political discussion recently taking place in Turkey on further democratization is concerned, especially the Turkish nationalist considers that democratization in the way to the EU membership and attempts to build the unity and peace in the country may result in breaking away of Turkey. Following this discussion, it is claimed that:

H7: Level of attachment to national identity may explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the EU-led reforms.

Empirical Analysis

Data

In order to test the hypotheses about the micro-level determinants of support for the EU, a novel data set, collected through the questionnaires which were applied to 2047 university youths in 26 universities in November and December 2009 throughout Turkey, is utilized. Distribution of the universities in 7 regions is as follows: İstanbul, Uludağ (Bursa), Kocaeli and Beykent Universities in the Marmara Region; Dokuz Eylül University (İzmir), İzmir Economics and Ege Universities in the Aegean Region; Akdeniz Bölgesinden Akdeniz (Antalya), Çukurova (Adana) and Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Universities in the Mediterranean Region; Selçuk (Konya), Ankara, Erciyes (Akyseri) and Afyon Kocatepe Universities in the Central Anatolia Region; Zonguldak Karaelmas, Ondokuz Mayıs (Samsun), Gaziosmanpaşa (Tokat) ve Karadeniz Teknik Universities in the Black Sea Region; Kafkas (Kars), İnönü (Malatya), Atatürk (Erzurum) and Van Yüzüncü Yıl Universities in the East Anatolia Region and Dicle (Diyarbakır), Fırat (Elazığ), Gaziantep and Harran (Şanlıurfa) Universities in the South East Anatolia Region. Distribution of the student in each university is presented in the Appendix A.

Initially, the base line data for the registered student in each university is obtained from the Educational Statistics of the Higher Educational Council of Turkey. The number of target student for the questionnaire in each university is determined by weighing the registered students in each university. During the application of the questionnaire to target students, the number of students in each department in each faculty in each university and gender are carefully designed to get random information to represent the full sample, the university youths. The distribution of the sample in terms of gender is 52,6 percent man and %47,4 percent female.

The logistic regression is employed in the empirical analysis. The use logistic regression is commonly utilized statistical tool for the analysis which uses the binary dependent variable (approval or disapproval of the EU-led reforms in Turkey). Logistic regression results provide probabilities that an individual will support for the EU-led reforms, given a certain combination of values on the independent variables. It proves to be a useful tool as it allows us to differentiate between groups of respondents and compare the likelihoods that they will support for the EU-led reforms.

Operationalization of Variables

Support for the EU-led reforms, the dependent variable is operationalized using the question:

“The reforms carried out in the framework of the EU membership in Turkey is *necessary*”

The answer for this question is constructed in terms of a 5-item Likert- Scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree). The final distribution of the dependent variable is 51,2 percent in favor (agree plus strongly agree) and 25,4 percent opposed (strongly disagree plus disagree) or 23,4 percent undecided as presented in Table 1. It is very interesting that about 23 percent of the student did not provide any information and stated as “undecided”.

“The reforms carried out in the framework of the EU membership in Turkey is <i>necessary</i> ”					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	177	8,6	9,0	9,0
	disagree	324	15,8	16,4	25,4
	undecided	462	22,6	23,4	48,8
	agree	680	33,2	34,4	83,2
	strongly agree	332	16,2	16,8	100,0
	Total	1975	96,5	100,0	
Missing	System	72	3,5		
Total		2047	100,0		

Table 1: Distribution of the Answers for the Necessity of Reforms

For the purposes of this study, support for the EU-led reforms is operationalized as a binary variable, coded 1 when the respondent (agree plus strongly agree) believes in necessity of the reforms, and 0 when the respondent (strongly disagree plus disagree plus undecided) do not support the reforms or when s/he is undecided. This sort of coding has significant methodological advantages, in terms of larger sample size and more equal distribution, compared to a ‘clean’ dichotomy of ‘in favor’ and ‘against’ answers (Ehin, 2001). Also,

the theoretically interesting question is not what distinguishes firm supporters of reforms from firm opponents but what distinguishes firm supporters from everybody else (Ehin, 2001:43).

The proposed hypotheses require the introduction of five concepts that need to be operationalized: *Partisanship*, *political attachment (ideological self-description)*, *religious attachment*, *Islamic attachment*, *national identity*.

Partisanship, the first set of the independent variable is operationalized using the question:

“If there is a general election tomorrow, which party would vote for?”

The answer for this question constitutes of the mainstream political parties in Turkey. In addition, the respondent is free to write down any other party which is not in the answer. The JDP, the RPP, the NAP, the FP and the DSP denotes the Justice and Development Party, the Republican People Party, National Action Party, Felicity Party and Democratic Society Party (recently banned by the Constitutional Court and re-established currently under the Peace and Democracy Party). Distribution of possible vote for the political parties is presented in Table 2. The other parties are DP, Democrat Party; DLP, Democratic Left Party; GUP, Great Unity Party. These small parties are not included in the analysis. As can be seen from Table 2, the biggest party student would vote for is “none of the established party”. This information is very interesting and implies that the university youths are not happy with the existing parties.

Five dummy variables for mainstream political parties (JDP, RPP, NAP, FP, DSP) are created. This dummy is obtained in the binary form, coded 1 when the respondent would vote one of the political parties and 0 when the respondent would vote for the other parties or when s/he is undecided. In addition, one more dummy as “None” created as the same methodology to represent the biggest group who would not vote for “none of the existing parties”.

If there is a general election tomorrow, which party would vote for?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	JDP	420	20,5	21,4	21,4
	RPP	425	20,8	21,6	43,0
	NAP	256	12,5	13,0	56,0
	FP	36	1,8	1,8	57,8
	DP	18	,9	,9	58,7
	DLP	22	1,1	1,1	59,9
	DSP	92	4,5	4,7	64,5
	GUP	47	2,3	2,4	66,9
	Other	99	4,8	5,0	72,0
	None	524	25,6	26,7	98,6
	Not Classified			1,4	100,0
	Total	1966	96,0	100,0	
Missing	System	81	4,0		
Total		2047	100,0		

Table 2: Distribution of Possible Vote for the Political Parties

Political attachment (ideological self-description), this independent variable is operationalized using the question:

“Which of the following identities commonly used in Turkey describes you best?”

The answer for this question includes “Turkish Nationalist, Atatürkist, Kemalist, Nationalist (Ulusalıcı), Feminist, Social Democrat, Socialist/Marxist, Islamist, Other (please state:.....)”. For the purpose of this study, five dummies for each mainstream self-description (*Atatürkist*, 27,9 percent; *Turkish nationalist*, 21,7 percent; *Social democrat*, 14,3 percent; *nationalist* (ulusalcı), 9,9 percent; *Islamist*, 7,8) is created in a binary form as coded 1 if the respondent describes himself as **one** of the above identities, and 0 if the respondent describes himself as **the others** of the above identities.

Religious attachment, this independent variable is operationalized using the question:

“How would you define yourself in terms of your approach towards religion?”

There is a ten-item scale in the questionnaire, and the answers 1 to 10 means that zero if the respondent is disinterested in religion in extreme case (atheist) and 10 if the respondent is interested in religion in the other extreme case (radical). Distribution of the students’ answers is presented in Table 3.

How would you define yourself in terms of your approach towards religion?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	57	2,8	2,9	2,9
	2,00	51	2,5	2,6	5,4
	3,00	94	4,6	4,7	10,1
	4,00	72	3,5	3,6	13,7
	5,00	320	15,6	16,0	29,7
	6,00	291	14,2	14,6	44,3
	7,00	366	17,9	18,3	62,6
	8,00	458	22,4	22,9	85,5
	9,00	175	8,5	8,8	94,2
	10,00	116	5,7	5,8	100,0
	Total	2000	97,7	100,0	
Missing	System	47	2,3		
Total		2047	100,0		

Table 3: Approaches of Students towards Religion

As seen in Table 3, the answers are unevenly distributed and focus on 5-8 range. Two binary variables are created from these answers. First one is “*Moderately Religious*”, accounted for 48,9 percent, coded 1 if the respondent describes himself (herself) as 5-7, and 0 if the respondent describes himself (herself) as others. Second one is “*Religious*”, accounted for 22,9 percent, coded 1 if the respondent describes himself (herself) as 8, and 0 if the respondent describes himself (herself) as others.

Islamic attachment, this variable is operationalized using the question:

“How would you describe yourself in terms of adherence to Islamic values?”

There is a ten-item scale in the questionnaire, and the answers 1 to 10 means that zero if the respondent does not adhere to Islamic values at all and 10 if the respondent completely adheres to Islamic values. Distribution of the students’ answers is presented in Table 4.

How would you describe yourself in terms of adherence to Islamic values?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	54	2,6	2,7	2,7
	2,00	66	3,2	3,3	6,0
	3,00	93	4,5	4,6	10,6
	4,00	79	3,9	3,9	14,6
	5,00	270	13,2	13,5	28,1
	6,00	257	12,6	12,8	40,9
	7,00	345	16,9	17,2	58,2
	8,00	442	21,6	22,1	80,3
	9,00	212	10,4	10,6	90,9
	10,00	183	8,9	9,1	100,0
	Total	2001	97,8	100,0	
Missing	System	46	2,2		
Total		2047	100,0		

Table 4: Adherence of Students to Islamic values

National identity, this independent variable is operationalized using the question:

“How would you feel/define yourself whether you are European or not?”

The answer for this question is “European, European and Turkish, Turkish and European, Turkish, European and Other (please write down:.....), Other (please write down:.....) and European, Other (please write down:.....)”. Distribution of the answers is presented in Table 5.

As can be seen from Table 4, 56,6 percent of the students feel themselves as “Turkish”, 21,2 percent of them feel as “Turkish and European” and 4,3 percent feels as “European and Turkish” and 1,3 percent feel as “Kurdish”. As far as “European and Other”, “Other and European” and “Other” together account for 12,1 percent which might also include some Kurdish, albeit uncertain. Four binary dummies are structured from this information. “*European*” coded 1 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as European and 0 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as the other identities. “*European and Turkish*” coded 1 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as European and Turkish (simultaneously) and 0 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as the other

identities. “*Turkish and European*” coded 1 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as Turkish and European (simultaneously) and 0 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as the other identities. “*Turkish*” coded 1 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as Turkish and 0 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as the other identities. “*Kurdish*” coded 1 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as Kurdish and 0 if the respondent feels himself (herself) as the other identities.

How would you feel/define yourself whether you are European or not?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	European	36	1,8	1,8	1,8
	European and Turkish	84	4,1	4,3	6,1
	Turkish and European	416	20,3	21,2	27,3
	Turkish	1110	54,2	56,6	83,9
	European and Other	20	1,0	1,0	85,0
	Other and European	43	2,1	2,2	87,1
	Other	174	8,5	8,9	96,0
	Kurdish	25	1,2	1,3	97,3
	Not Classified			2,7	100
	Total	1961	95,8	100,0	
Missing	System	86	4,2		
Total		2047	100,0		

Table 5: National Identity

Other variables, *Gender*: 1 if the respondent is a man, and zero otherwise. *Urban*: 1 if parents of the respondent live in city center and zero otherwise. *Residence*: 1 if the respondent lives at least 3 months in any EU countries and zero otherwise.

Statistical Findings

The logistic regression is employed to empirically investigate the determinants of “support for the EU-led reforms” in the empirical analysis because the dependent variable is dichotomous and the results are presented in Table 6.

In order to test the above proposed hypothesis, a model for each category is developed. In particular, Model I provides evidence how and to what extent the partisanship contributes to determine the support for the reform in Turkey. Model II deals with the issue whether the political attachment (self-description) is an important factor to explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the reform. Model III and IV look at the role of religion and the adherence to Islam whether they play any role in this issue respectively. Model V examines whether the national identity explains the variation in individual attitudes towards the reform. Model VI includes all the variables in the previous models (I-V). Finally Model VII shows the most important factors which contribute to explain the determinants of the EU-led reforms in Turkey.

Table 1 show that the empirical findings are robust. In particular, Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test indicates that the utilized models in the analysis are well-fit with the data set at hand. In addition, the predicted powers of the estimated models are at statistically acceptable level.

Model I reveals that whereas the supporters of the JDP and the DSP approve the EU-led reforms, those of both the NAP and the FP disapprove this process. Interestingly the coefficient for the RPP, albeit negative, is statistically insignificant. These findings show that supporters of the RPP as a mainstream party are skeptical about the reforms.

Model II indicates that political attachment may be important to explain the variation in individual attitudes towards the reforms. While those who describe themselves as Atatürkist are against the reforms, social democrats are in favor of the reforms. The self-description of the university students in terms of Turkish nationalist, Nationalist (Ulusalcı) and Islamist does not contribute to explain the variations in individual attitudes.

Model III and IV provide evidence on the attachment to religion and adherence to Islam. The findings show that whereas attachment to religion has a statistically significant impact on the individual attitudes toward the reform, adherence to Islam does not indicate a significant influence on this issue.

Model V examines the effect of national identity on the individual attitudes toward the reforms. The results indicate that while those who feel as European are in favor of reforms, those who feel as Turkish are against the reforms.

	Explanatory Variables	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI	Model VII
Partisanship	JDP	0,57 (0,18)***					0,62 (0,20)***	0,73 (0,14)***
	RPP	-0,21 (0,17)					-0,06 (0,20)	
	NAP	-0,76 (0,19)***					-0,6 (0,21)***	-0,39 (0,15)**
	DSP	0,84 (0,30)***					0,39 (0,34)	
	FP	-0,85 (0,38)**					-0,53 (0,40)	
	None	-0,14 (0,17)					-0,08 (0,18)	
Political Attachment	Atatürkist		-0,30 (0,14)**				-0,08 (0,17)	
	Turkish Nationalist		-0,05 (0,15)				0,25 (0,18)	
	Social Democrat		0,92 (0,18)***				0,75 (0,19)***	0,78 (0,16)***
	Nationalist		0,14 (0,18)				0,16 (0,21)	
	Islamist		0,14 (0,20)				0,004 (0,23)	
Religious Attachment	Moderately Religious			0,26 (0,11)**			0,23 (0,13)*	0,28 (0,12)**
	Religious			0,36 (0,13)***			0,33 (0,16)**	0,37 (0,14)***
Islamic Attachment	Moderately Muslim				0,06 (0,14)		0,13 (0,16)	
	Devoted Muslim				0,08 (0,11)		0,02 (0,14)	
National identity	European					0,75 (0,42)*	0,85 (0,47)*	0,74 (0,45)*
	European and Turkish					0,38 (0,27)	0,57 (0,30)*	
	Turkish and European					0,02 (0,16)	0,20 (0,19)	
	Turkish					-0,60 (0,13)***	-0,36 (0,17)**	-0,57 (0,11)***
	Kurdish					0,69 (0,49)	0,82 (0,59)	
Other variables	Residence	0,36 (0,25)	0,48 (0,26)*	0,37 (0,25)	0,37 (0,24)	0,20 (0,25)	0,51 (0,27)*	0,50 (0,26)*
	Urban	0,09 (0,09)	0,00 (0,09)	0,03 (0,09)	0,04 (0,09)	0,04 (0,09)	0,05 (0,10)	
	Gender	0,50 (0,09)***	0,45 (0,10)***	0,51 (0,09)***	0,52 (0,09)***	0,47 (0,09)***	0,46 (0,11)***	0,44 (0,10)***
	Constant	-0,19 (0,16)	-0,26 (0,14)*	-0,44 (0,12)***	-0,27 (0,09)***	0,09 (0,15)	-0,50 (0,24)**	-0,31 (0,13)**
	N	1851	1787	1877	1881	1866	1712	1728
	Predicted Correctly (%)	62,4	57,3	56,7	56,8	59,2	63,1	62,3
	Hosmer Lemeshow Test	8,15	9,64	2,46	1,57	1,59	6,89	2,99
	Nagelkerke R ²	0,08	0,06	0,03	0,02	0,07	0,14	0,13

Note: Values in the parenthesis are the standard error. ***, ** and * denotes significance at 1, 5 and 10 percent level respectively.

Table 6. Results of Logistic Regression on Determinants of the Support for the EU-Led Reforms in Turkey

In the econometrical analysis, adding the model may change the significance of the independent variables. Considering the multi-facet nature of the reform process, one should take into account these factors. Model VII provides an overall picture on this issue as a final model. In particular, statistical findings show that signs and significance of the variables for the NAP and Turkish (proxy for the national identity) states that supporters of the NAP and those who feel Turkish does not approve the reform process. On the other hand, the variables for the JDP, Social Democrat (proxy for the political attachment), both Moderately Religious and Religious (proxies for the religious attachment), European (proxy for the national identity), Residence (proxy for social learning) and Gender are positive and statistically significant. These findings show that these variables explain the variation in individual attitudes toward the reform. In particular, the supporters of the JDP, social democrats, religious people, feeling to be European, living in the member countries and finally man approve the EU-led reforms in Turkey.

Interestingly while supporters of the RPP disapprove the reforms, the Social Democrats approve the reforms. Similarly the coefficients of the DSP (pro-Kurdish party) and Kurdish (as a national identity) are not significant in final model (VII).

Conclusion

It is usually argued among the academics and policy makers that the Turkey's EU perspective is very important because it plays as an external anchor to push further the democratization of the country. On the hand, reforms process for the democratization needs to be designed very carefully because the internal support are very vital for the sustainability of the reforms in every society. The approval of the reforms are especially very important for Turkey as a divided society in terms of secular and conservative, Turks and Kurds, center and periphery.

Turkey has experiencing a reform process with the support and conditionality of the EU since 2000. The reforms for democratization show a cycle process which is very closely associated with the EU's perspectives for Turkey. In other words, when the EU send a clear signs for the possible full membership, democratization has increased in Turkey or vice versa. It is generally argued that reform process has been slowed especially after 2005 when Turkey got the negotiation for the full membership. One of the reasons might be the lack of support for further reform on democratization in Turkey because the recent reform attempts has started to exacerbate the decades-old political problems such as the Kurdish issue in the country.

This paper, therefore, tries to examine the youth support for the EU-led reforms in Turkey. In order to test the possible source of the support for the EU-led reforms in Turkey, a novel data set is collected from the university students in Turkey and utilized by the logistic regression. The Empirical findings reveal that the partisanship, political attachment, religious attachment and national identity contribute to explanation of the variations in individual attitudes. In particular, while the supporters of the JDP, Social Democrats, Religious students, those who feel as European, living in the member countries and the gender have positive and significant impacts on the individual attitudes toward the reform process. On the other hand, supporters of the NAP and those who feel themselves as Turkish disapprove the reforms and do not see them as necessary. Interestingly while the social democrats approve the reforms, the supporters of the RPP do not support it. This finding is in line with the argument which states that Turkish left identified with the Kemalist legacy consider the EU as a threat to Turkey's fundamentals in terms of the national unity and secularism. Similarly the supporters of pro-Kurdish party (DSP) and those who feel themselves as Kurdish does not explain the variations in individual attitudes towards the reforms.

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Appendix A

Distribution of the Student in Each University

University		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	İstanbul	216	10,6	10,6	10,6
	Uludağ	107	5,2	5,2	15,8
	Beykent	25	1,2	1,2	17,0
	Kocaeli	97	4,7	4,7	21,7
	Dokuz Eylül	120	5,9	5,9	27,6
	Ege	128	6,3	6,3	33,9
	İzmir	27	1,3	1,3	35,2
	Akdeniz	35	1,7	1,7	36,9
	Çukurova	98	4,8	4,8	41,7
	Sütçü İmam	33	1,6	1,6	43,3
	Selçuk	182	8,9	8,9	52,2
	Ankara	136	6,6	6,6	58,8
	Erciyes	75	3,7	3,7	62,5
	Afyon Kocatepe	52	2,5	2,5	65,0
	Zonguldak Karaelmas	34	1,7	1,7	66,7
	Ondokuz Mayıs	104	5,1	5,1	71,8
	Gaziosmanpaşa	29	1,4	1,4	73,2
	Karadeniz	126	6,2	6,2	79,3
	Kafkas	30	1,5	1,5	80,8
	İnönü	53	2,6	2,6	83,4
	Atatürk	111	5,4	5,4	88,8
	Yüzüncü Yıl	42	2,1	2,1	90,9
	Dicle	66	3,2	3,2	94,1
	Harran	21	1,0	1,0	95,1
	Fırat	64	3,1	3,1	98,2
	Gaziantep	36	1,8	1,8	100,0
	Total	2047	100,0	100,0	